

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: NA/A
TAGS: CSCE, PARM, SOPN, UR, US
SUBJECT: "PRAVDA" EDITORS COMMENT ON US-USSR RELATIONS

1. DURING TWO-HOUR INFORMAL DISCUSSION WITH EMBOFFS JUNE 22,
"PRAVDA" AMERICAN DESK EDITOR SERGEY VISHNEVSKIY AND HIS DEPUTY BORIS
OREKHOV TOUCHED ON WIDE RANGE OF TOPICS AFFECTING US-USSR RELATIONS,
BUT REPEATEDLY MENTIONED "IMPATIENCE" OF SOVIET LEADERS WHO SEE NO
INDICATIONS THAT NEW US ADMINISTRATION IS MOVING TOWARD MORE
"REALISTIC" POLICY VIS-A-VIS THE SOVIET UNION.

2. TO ILLUSTRATE THE SOVIET VISION OF "REALITY" VISHNEVSKIY, A
FORMER WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT, DREW ON HEADLINES OF THE DAY WHILE
REPEATING A FAMILIAR LISTING OF SOVIET PRIORITIES IN US-USSR
RELATIONS. THE MOST ESSENTIAL SUBJECT, INTONED VISHNEVSKIY, IS
NATURALLY SALT, FOLLOWED CLOSELY BY MBFR. BUT WHAT ARE THE SOVIET
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UNION AND THE UNITED STATES DISCUSSING NOW, ASKED VISHNEVSKIY
RHETORICALLY -- CSCE AND THE INDIAN OCEAN

3. CSCE CAN BE VERY IMPORTANT TO SOVIET-AMERICAN RELATIONS, NOT
BECAUSE IT IS "LINKED " TO MORE IMPORTANT TOPICS, OPINED THE
"PRAVDA" EDITOR, BUT BECAUSE IT CAN CREATE A FAVORABLE OR

UNFAVORABLE "ATMOSPHERE" WHICH HE CONCLUDED, "DEPENDS ON THE US." NEITHER DOES THE SOVIET UNION CONSIDER THE INDIAN OCEAN DISCUSSIONS UNIMPORTANT, STATED VISHNEVSKIY, BECAUSE THE SOVIETS DO NOT WISH TO CUT OFF ALL DIALOGUE WITH THE US. BUT, HE ASKED SKEPTICALLY, WHAT DO WE REALLY EXPECT TO ACCOMPLISH IN THE INDIAN OCEAN?

4. THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP IS PERSUADED THAT AMERICA'S EUROPEAN ALLIES VIEW THE PRIORITIES MORE REALISTICALLY THAN DOES PRESIDENT CARTER. THUS, BREZHNEV'S TRIP TO PARIS IS JUST AS SIGNIFICANT FOR US-USSR RELATIONS AS ARE DIRECT CONTACTS IN BELGRADE, MOSCOW AND WASHINGTON. WITH THE FRENCH, THE SOVIET LEADERS ARE DISCUSSING THE VITAL ISSUES, EMPHASIZED VISHNEVSKIY, AND THE SOVIETS BELIEVE THAT THE BRITISH, THE GERMANS AND OTHER WESTERN EUROPEAN LEADERS ARE ALSO PREPARED FOR SERIOUS DISCUSSIONS.

5. VISHNEVSKIY LISTED "RESPONSIBLE, MODERATE" ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS WHO, IN HIS VIEW, SHOULD BE GIVING THE US PRESIDENT "REALISTIC" GUIDANCE ON HOW TO DEAL WITH THE SOVIET UNION -- VANCE, SHULMAN, WARNKE, BROWN (BRZEZINSKI, WHO VISHNEVSKIY CLAIMS TO KNOW PERSONALLY AND OFTEN MENTIONS WITH FONDNESS, WAS NOT INCLUDED). PRESIDENT KENNEDY (IN OFFICE DURING VISHNEVSKIY'S TOUR IN WASHINGTON) WAS CITED AS AN INEXPERIENCED PRESIDENT WHO, ACCORDING TO VISHNEVSKIY, QUICKLY LEARNED HIS LESSONS IN DEALING WITH THE SOVIET UNION. (EMBOFFS SUGGESTED THAT VISHNEVSKIY SHOULD NOT HAVE TO BE REMINDED OF SUCH HISTORICAL FACTS AS US-SOVIET DIFFERENCES OVER CUBA AND BERLIN.) THE PRAVDA EDITOR REMARKED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THAT THE SOVIETS HAD BEEN GREAVELY CONCERNED OVER THE PROSPECTS OF A NIXON PRESIDENCY, AND HAD BEEN WRONG IN THEIR ASSESSMENTS. NOW IT APPEARED THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP HAD MADE ANOTHER MISJUDGMENT IN BEING OPTIMISTIC ABOUT A CARTER PRESIDENCY.

6. VISHNEVSKIY DISCOUNTED NEGATIVE CRITICISM ABOUT PRESIDENT CARTER AS EXPECTED FROM WHAT HE DISMISSED AS UNSOPHISTICATED ORGANS OF SOVIET PRESS (HE SINGLED OUT "LITERATURNAYA GAZETA" WITH OBVIOUS SCORN). BUT HE POINTEDLY OBSERVED THAT WHEN "VISHNEVSKIY OF 'PRAVDA' AND MATVEYEV OF 'IZVESTIYA' WRITE CRITICAL ARTICLES ABOUT THE PRESIDENT, IT REFLECTS CONCERN AT THE 'HIGHEST LEVELS' OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT." VISHNEVSKIY WRYLY ADDED THAT THIS WAS JUST A SMALL EXAMPLE OF WHAT SOVIETS COULD GRIND OUT IF PROVOKED.

7. VISHNEVSKIY AGREED TO SOME DEGREE WITH EMBOFFS' REMARKS THAT PART OF SOVIET PROBLEM WAS IN DEALING WITH US ADMINISTRATION WHICH WAS STANDING UP FOR AMERICAN "PRINCIPLES," OR TO PUT IT IN SOVIET TERMS, THE US WAS ASSERTING ITS RIGHT TO COMPETE ON IDEOLOGICAL GROUNDS WITH THE SOVIET UNION. VISHNEVSKIY FIDGETED AND AGAIN REFERRED TO IMPORTANCE OF CREATING "FAVORABLE ATMOSPHERE" FOR SOLVING CRUCIAL PROBLEMS SUCH AS SALT. FOR EXAMPLE, VISHNEVSKIY ASKED WHY DID CYRUS VANCE HAVE TO SAY THAT THE TOT

CASE WOULD BE DISCUSSED AT BELGRADE? THAT WILL ONLY EXACERBATE SOVIET FEELINGS THAT THE US IS PROVOKING THE USSR AND IS NOT REALLY INTERESTED IN SERIOUS DISCUSSIONS. EMBOFFS NOTED THAT SOVIETS HAD CREATED THE TOTH AFFAIR, THAT US HAD "IDEOLOGICAL" COMMITMENT TO RAISE SUCH ISSUES, AND THAT IT WAS SOVIETS WHO WERE MAKING "LINKAGE" PROBLEMS BETWEEN SUCH US-USSR CONCERNS AS CSCE AND SALT.

8. "PRAVDA" EDITORS CONCLUDED THE DISCUSSIONS BY SAYING THAT IMMEDIATE OUTLOOK FOR IMPROVING US-USSR RELATIONS WAS NOT GOOD. BUT EFFORTS TO DISCUSS DIFFERENCES AT ALL LEVELS SHOULD CONTINUE.
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